

NAME: Enomoto, Sadakazu DATE OF BIRTH: 1880 PLACE OF BIRTH: _____
Age: 94 Sex: M Marital Status: W Education: Junior High School

PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: 1899 Age: 19 M.S. S Port of entry: San Fran.
Occupation/s: 1. School Boy 2. Flower nurseryman 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. San Francisco, Ca. 2. Redwood City, Ca. 3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian Church
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: North Dakota (Internment Camp)
Name of relocation center: None, Enomoto stayed in Denver, Col. until end of war.
Dispensation of property: Asso. took care of nursery Names of bank/s: Anglo Calif.
Jobs held in camp: 1. _____ 2. _____ Bank
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: _____

POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: Late 1945
Address/es: 1. San Francisco, Calif. (Redwood City)
3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian Church
Activities: 1. Kenjin-Kai (Prefectural Association) 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: Deceased

Name of interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe Date: 4/6/74 Place: San Francisco, Ca.

Transltn. Yasuka Akamatsu

NAME: MR. SADAKUSU ENOMOTO

AGE: 94

BIRTHDATE: Meiji 13 (1880)

BIRTH PLACE:

YEAR CAME TO U.S.: Meiji 32 (1899)

AGE WHEN CAME TO U.S.: 19

MAJOR OCCUPATION: Flower nurseryman

RELOCATION CAMP: internment camp in North Dakota, relocated in Denver.

Interview date: 4/6/74

Interviewer: Rev. Hei Takarabe

Translated date:

Translator: yasuka akamatsu

MR. SADAKUSU ENOMOTO

Rev. Takarabe: This is something that our church is trying to do. We are interviewing our Isseis, listening to their past experiences and recording them on tapes. We plan to translate them into English so that our third, forth, and future generations can read them. I will ask you some questions. Please tell me what you remember.

Q. What is your name?

A. My name is Sadakusu Enomoto.

Q. When were you born?

A. In Meiji 13.

Q. How old are you now?

A. 94 years old.

Q. Mr. Enomoto, how far did you go to school in Japan?

A. Junior high school.

Q. What did your family do?

A. They were farmers.

Q. How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A. There were three of us and I am the youngest.

Q. When did you come to America?

A. In the year of Meiji 32.

Q. How old were you?

A. I was 19 years old.

Q. What city did you arrive?

A. In San Francisco.

Q. What was your reason for coming to America?

A. A person from my home town, Mr. Domoto, who operated North American

Trading Co. in San Francisco, came back to Japan to get married.

He told me that there was a great future in America. I decided to come with him and his bride and came on the same ship. I worked as a school boy for 7 years and did house work, etc. Then I bought 5 acres on contract in Redwood City and decided to grow flowers.

Q. When was this?

A. It was in 1907. After the earthquake in 1906, I had to leave there because of the fire.

Q. Do you remember something about your school boy days?

A. I went to school and when I was at home, I helped in the kitchen.

Q. Did you make any mistakes?

A. When I was offered oatmeal mush in the morning, I didn't know how to eat it, so I used my knife to cut it up into chunks and ate it with a fork. The waitress told me I wasn't supposed to eat it in that way. I didn't understand her well at that time but she said I was supposed to put sugar and milk on the mush, break it up with a spoon and eat it. It seems funny now.

Q. Did you have any difficulties when you came?

A. I didn't have the experience as a school boy and when I tried out at first, I didn't get hired. But I got used to the job in about a year. I was receiving only about \$ 1.50 per week.

Q. You did this seven years?

A. Yes, I did this 7 years. I decided I couldn't get anywhere keeping on this way and pondered what I should do. There was some land for sale and a friend said I could grow flowers there. 5 acres was \$ 1,750.00, \$ 200.00 down and \$ 15.00 per month payment. I didn't have any difficulty.

Q. Where was this?

A. In Redwood City. (Calif.)

Q. Were you able to purchase land then?

A. Yes. Around 1910, Alien Land Law came into effect and non-citizens were not able to buy land after that. (Note: According to other interviewees, the Alien Land Law came into effect in 1913) I got married in Japan and brought my wife to America about that time. The law was that if I died, the land would be taken by the state and could not be transferred to my wife. When my child was born, I changed it into a corporation on myself, my wife, and my child. This was a loophole that we were able to do. We made it into a joint stock company, Enomoto Company, so the family could hold the land and expand. The land is valuable now. Once I was asked to march in a parade as a pioneer in Redwood City.

Q. Is your business kept on now?

A. Yes. My children are carrying on the business.

Q. Did you have any difficulty since you started the business?

A. Yes, during the war.

Q. How was it at the beginning?

A. There was anti-Japanese feeling then but we worked faithfully and our Japanese employees were all good workers. Neighbors liked us and we didn't have much difficulty but some Italian operators failed in their businesses.

Q. How many employees did you have then?

A. About 10 people. When we were short of supply, we bought flowers from other growers and shipped them to all parts of the United States. There were many Chinese growers then. Flowers were cheap at that time.

We advertised in magazines and newspapers and got many orders. I worked up until the war but retired after that and have not been working since.

Q. What were you growing?

A. Mostly carnations in greenhouses. Too many people started to grow carnations since then and the price came down. Then we started to grow roses. We have 10 acres in Half Moon Bay and we have a new 100,000 square foot green house in Redwood City. My grandson operates the new place with an Italian helper.

Q. When you first started, were the employees all Issei Japanese?

A. Yes.

Q. If you had failure at any time, please tell me about it.

A. Everything went pretty well. Sometimes we had inexperienced employees and flowers weren't very good but we managed to buy flowers from other growers to ship out and make up for it.

Q. Was this after the earthquake in San Francisco?

A. Yes.

Q. When did the Anti-Japanese Movement begin?

A. About 1912. The state created the Alien Land Law. A person who bought before the law was able to keep the land but could not transfer the property to others. Therefore, we started to corporation. A corporation was able to buy land. Most Japanese have citizenship now so there is no difficulty in buying land.

Q. When you came to America, were there about 200 Japanese in the San Francisco area?

A. Yes.

Q. When did you get to know Dr. Sturge?

A. I think it was before the earthquake. I learned English from him. I think he died around 1917. He was friendly to Japanese and he was the superintendent of the Japanese Presbyterian Churches.

Q. When did you get married?

A. In 1912.

Q. How did you get married?

A. I went to Japan, met her and got married in about 6 months and brought her to this country.

Q. Was she from Wakayama?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you continue your flower growing business?

A. Yes. I was also importing some things from Japan such as fertilizers. Japan had good fertilizers such as fish meal, oil cake, etc.

I was investigated when the war broke out because I was doing quite a big import business. Federal investigators came and checked all my books. At that time, Japanese Association Presidents, businessmen, and men in import-export business were interned. I was interned also.

Q. Where did you go to?

A. To an internment camp in North Dakota. My wife and five children moved to Denver, Colorado. When the evacuation order came, they moved on their own and did not go into WRA centers. After my hearing was over, I joined my family in Denver from North Dakota. We rented a house and stayed there until the war ended.

Q. Did anything happen at the internment camp?

A. The government controlled the camp and everything was run orderly. I think the United States took good care of us. Food was plentiful. I don't know what Japan would have done under similar circumstances.

Q. About how many internees were there?

A. I think there were about 400 internees. The director of our Trading Company and many other well-known Japanese were there.

Q. Were there any problems?

A. No, there weren't any particular problems.

Q. Did you think it was wrong?

A. No, because it was wartime. I thought the Japanese government was probably doing the same.

Q. Did you feel any danger for your life?

A. No, I didn't think so. When we were travelling by train, the shades were always down and whenever we stopped, there were machine guns, but there were so many of us together that I wasn't scared. I thought they did those things because of the war.

Q. Do you remember something else about the camp?

A. There isn't anything particular that I can think of.

Q. Please tell me what you did during the Depression.

A. I sold about the same amount of flowers.

Q. Weren't there bankruptcies, etc.?

A. There were some. There were many accounts that I couldn't collect on, but I made it through the Depression.

Q. What bank did you do business with at that time?

A. The Anglo California Bank. They helped me when I needed it.

Q. Weren't there Japanese banks too?

A. Yes, there were the Sumitomo and the Yokohama Specie banks, but I didn't use them.

Q. Didn't most firms use the Japanese banks?

A. Most Japanese firms did business with the Yokohama Specie Bank,

but for a business like mine they didn't loan out any money. I didn't ask, but I thought they didn't. The American banks were good to me.

Q. How was your business when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A. Around that time, I was doing business on a smaller scale. When the war broke out, business stopped.

Q. Were Japanese children put in a segregated school around here?

A. No, not around here.

Q. How did you feel when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A. I was surprised but there wasn't anything we could do about it.

Rumors started that we would be put in camps but I didn't think we would be killed.

Q. When the war started, did you feel any danger for your business?

A. I thought there would be no business.

Q. When did the FBI come to your place?

A. About one week after Pearl Harbor was attacked.

Q. Did they close your business?

A. No, they let us carry on the business but they investigated our books, etc. I didn't do anything illegal and wasn't afraid at all.

Q. Then did they take you to an internment camp about one month later?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you close your business?

A. Yes, I closed my business.

Q. How old were you then?

A. Nearly 60 years old.

Q. Were your children helping you run your business then?

A. Yes, my son was studying at U.C. but when the war broke out he quit school to help me. After the war, he went back to U.C. and graduated.

Q. Was he your eldest son?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you do with the business while you were in Denver?

A. We closed the flower business, but the nursery was taken care of by the Association.

Q. What did you do in Denver?

A. I didn't do anything. A year after we moved there, I started to receive Social Security. One of my daughters worked as a stenographer.

Q. When the war broke out, you were near retirement age, weren't you?

A. Yes, I retired. We couldn't make money by having someone else manage the flower business. We had to watch and buy fresh and good quality. It's hard to do this when you leave it up to employees.

Q. When did you return to California?

A. Soon after the war ended.

Q. Did you feel any anti-Japanese feeling before the war broke out?

A. No, I didn't feel any.

Q. When you returned after the war, was the business returned to you?

A. I didn't open any business. The nursery was returned to me without any trouble. During the war, the people who ran it made money and they were happy. My second son is running the import business within the nursery, now.

Q. What is he growing now?

A. Roses.

Q. When you first came to America, what were Japanese doing in San Francisco?

A. There were many laundry and dry cleaning establishments. There must have been 120 or 130. It didn't take much investment and a man

and his wife were able to operate this type of business and make money.

Q. What else did the Japanese do?

A. There were some in the import-export business, but not very many.

Q. When did the Sumitomo and the Yokohama Specie Banks open their business?

A. When I came, the Specie Bank was already established in San Francisco.

Q. What sort of hardships did Japanese have when they came to America? Language difficulty?

A. Yes, not knowing English was a hardship. There were many businesses dealing with Japanese, such as eating places.

Q. In Sacramento, I heard that there were some people in the prostitution business.

A. Yes, there were prostitutes. There were quite a few Japanese women already in the Chinese section of the town when I came.

Q. Were there gambling places?

A. There were one or two Japanese gambling places in San Francisco. Some went but I didn't like it and I didn't go. Did you come from Japan and were you a Christian minister in Japan?

(Rev T) Q. No, I went to Theological school in this country after I came to America.

(Mr. E) A. Where were you born?

(Rev. T) Q. I was born in Kagoshima, Japan, and I was raised in Manchuria when I was young.

(Mr. E) A. I've been to Manchuria once.

Q. When was it?

A. It was before the war.

Q. How long were you there?

A. About one month. My brother-in-law was there working for a firm.

Q. When you arrived in San Francisco, did you go to Angel Island?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. How long did you stay?

A. I stayed two days.

Q. Where did you settle first?

A. I went to a Japanese boarding house in San Francisco. I had a friend who looked after me.

Q. Who taught you the flower business?

A. No one taught me. My brother was here and he was working for a person who operated a flower business so I decided to go into this business.

Q. You didn't go through hardships such as some Japanese went through, did you?

A. No, I didn't. I know many people.

Q. Your business went smoothly?

A. Yes. I learned English from Dr. Sturge and was able to converse enough for my business. I also went to Heald's college in the evenings.

Q. How old is your eldest child now?

A. He is near 60. He is in the nursery business in Redwood City. My grandchildren are grown, too. My married daughter's family (Oku family) has a large nursery in Half Moon Bay. I think they have about 30 acres.

Q. What sort of people were on the ship when you came to America?

A. There was one passenger in the first class and he was on his way to Europe. I came in the second class. The ship was an English ship.

Q. Were you the only Japanese?

A. No, there must have been about 30 Japanese on the ship.

Q. Were they all young?

A. Yes, they were young. Many were students.

Q. Do you have five children?

A. Yes.

Q. When did your first wife pass away?

A. About ten years after we got married. I went to Japan again and married my second wife. She died when I was 73 years old.

Q. When did you get married to your second wife?

A. Two or three years after my first wife died.

Q. Were your children all by your first wife?

A. No, two are by my first wife and three are by my second wife.

Q. How many trips did you make to Japan?

A. I made several trips.

Q. Do you belong to the Kenjin-Kai? (Prefectural Association)

A. Yes, I do.

Q. Do you belong to a Nursery Association?

A. My children do.

Q. What are your hobbies?

A. I don't have any.

Q. During WWI, what were you doing?

A. I was in the flower business.

Q. Did you sell well?

A. Yes, I was able to sell right along.

Q. Before the war, around 1920, were Japanese students sent to a segregated school?

A. Yes, they were, but Japan protested and that was stopped. It was difficult for Japanese students to come directly to the United States, so many come to Hawaii first and then transferred over to the United States. Anti-Japanese feeling started about that time. When the Japanese government protested about the Japanese students being put in segregated schools, the United States government made a pact with Japan that Japan would stop sending students by way of Hawaii.

Q. Which San Francisco newspaper was anti-Japanese?

A. It was the Examiner published by W. Randolph Hearst.

Q. What did they write?

A. I think they agitated anti-Japanese feeling. And I think the Labor Unions were behind them. They excluded Chinese first. (By the time I came, Chinese were not allowed to come to America.)

Q. When was the hardest time for you?

A. I didn't feel any. When times were bad, I cut down on my business. There were times I didn't make very much profit, but I didn't let it bother me.

Q. When were your best years?

A. I think it was before the war. I made most of my profit in the import business. My sons went to the University, studied floriculture, and they have expanded in this business.

Q. Did you hear about Christianity in Japan before you came to this country?

A. There was a man named Waichiro Honda who graduated from a Christian University and came to our village as an evangelist. We children laughed at him and threw stones at him because we didn't want to hear him talk about Christianity.

Q. Did you become a Christian after you met Dr. Sturge?

A. Yes.

Q. What kind of a person was Dr. Sturge?

A. He was friendly towards Japanese. He taught us English with kindness and he led us into Christianity. He had nieces and nephews but he willed his property to the Japanese. We are talking about rebuilding the Sturge building, but I don't know how it will turn out. People like Dr. Sturge are very few in this world.

Q. Do you have something that you were taught and that you cherish especially in your mind?

A. Not especially.

Q. What would you like to tell your grandchildren?

A. That's hard to answer.

Q. Do you think it's important for them to realize their identity as a Japanese race?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. As an Issei, is there anything you want to teach them?

A. I can't think of any.

Q. Do you think that the third generation are doing well?

A. I think they are doing all right.

Q. I think I shall end my interview with you at this time. Did you get tired?

A. Not especially.

Q. We are thinking of writing a book from these Issei oral interviews.

Is it permissible with you to let others read the book or hear this tape?

A. Yes, it is all right.

Q. May I have your signature of authorization?

A. Yes.

Q. Please sign here and date it April 6, 1974. Thank you very much for the interview.

A. It's not worth very much.

Q. It will help us a lot. I have interviewed Isseis living around Sacramento. Many have gone through hardship. They didn't go into business like you. Your experience is quite different.

A. I always think that the English language I learned from Dr. Sturge had helped me in my life. Many went to colleges but if I went, I would not have had the money to start my business. I think I did the right thing by working and studying part time.

Q. Many who worked as laborers did not succeed as well as you did.

A. I think so.

Q. I'm sure you had worries.

A. I was unfortunate in losing my wives. My first wife died of influenza and tuberculosis, and my second wife died of cancer. It was very hard for myself and my family.

Q. You have five children--what does your eldest do?

A. The eldest, a son by my first wife, took over my business. The second is a daughter and she is married to Dr. Watauabe, an x-ray physician and the third is a son. He works in a chemical laboratory in Silver Springs, Maryland. He has a doctor's degree in chemistry. The son by my first wife operates a nursery in Mountain View and he is doing well. His two sons are running the business with him. They have rental properties at a couple of places. The daughter by my first wife is married to Mr. Oku whom I mentioned before.

Q. How much education do they have?

A. They all went to universities.

Q. Do you think education is important?

A. I think both boys and girls should have a college education.

Q. Did you have hardships putting them through school?

A. No, because I was in business and was doing well. I knew enough English to do business. Those who didn't know enough English did have hardship. I think I was fortunate.

Q. Did most of your friends pass away?

A. Yes, they are gone.

Q. Do you know Mr. Takeshita?

A. Yes, I think he is one year younger than I. He is quite an intelligent man.

Q. Have you done anything together?

A. No, he lives in Oakland.

Q. What were you doing at the time of the San Francisco earthquake and fire?

A. I was working for a family. The place where I was didn't catch fire. The family went to stay at their resort in Los Gatos but I stayed in their home in San Francisco. The maid (a Caucasian) and I watched the house.

Q. In San Francisco, were there gambling houses before the earthquake?

A. I didn't notice any because I lived an honest life and I raised my children well which I am proud.

Q. You are a Pioneer.

A. Yes, I have been here quite long. I think there are some older than I.

Q. Were there many Issei single men here who have passed on?

- A. Yes, there were.
- Q. Did you think of going back to Japan to live?
- A. I had many children and I thought this country was better for them. I have a granddaughter who is married and lives in Japan. She met this man from Chiba Prefecture while attending school. She has a good job working for the English section of a Japanese newspaper in Tokyo and her husband is an architect for Mitsubishi Company.
- Q. Isn't it hard for her to live in Japan?
- A. It might be but she says she likes it over there. Her husband's brother is the branch manager for a firm in Vancouver, Canada. It seems she is married into a nice family.
- Q. You made a great success here.
- A. I can't say that but I can say I raised my children well.
- Q. Your saddest experience was losing your wives, wasn't it?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How old were the children?
- A. They were both young, four or five years old.
- Q. How did you raise them?
- A. My second wife was good to them.
- Q. Did you get married soon after your first wife died?
- A. Yes, it was fairly soon. She came from Japan and was living with her folks (Note: contradicts earlier statement)
- Q. When your second wife died, your children were quite grown, weren't they?
- A. Yes, they were grown. Mrs. Kobayashi looked after them for me.
- Q. You helped each other?
- A. Yes, this way both of us aren't lonely.
- Q. You don't think of going to your son's place to live, do you?
- A. No, I don't